

## Proverbs

וְלֹוֹתָה

merged

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This file contains merged sections from the following text versions:

-Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, published by JPS

-<https://jps.org/books/tanakh-the-holy-scriptures-blue/>

## Proverbs

### Chapter 1

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

For learning wisdom and discipline; For understanding words of discernment;

For acquiring the discipline for success, Righteousness, justice, and equity;

For endowing the simple with shrewdness, The young with knowledge and foresight.

-The wise man, hearing them, will gain more wisdom; The discerning man will learn to be adroit;

For understanding proverb and epigram, The words of the wise and their riddles.

The fear of the L ORD is the beginning a Or "best part." of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and discipline.

My son, heed the discipline of your father, And do not forsake the instruction of your mother;

For they are a graceful wreath upon your head, A necklace about your throat.

My son, if sinners entice you, do not yield;

If they say, "Come with us, Let us set an ambush to shed blood, Let us lie in wait for the innocent (Without cause!)

Like Sheol, let us swallow them alive; Whole, like those who go down into the Pit.

We shall obtain every precious treasure; We shall fill our homes with loot.

Throw in your lot with us; We shall all have a common purse."

My son, do not set out with them; Keep your feet from their path.

For their feet run to evil; They hurry to shed blood.

In the eyes of every winged creature The outspread net means nothing.

But they lie in ambush for their own blood; They lie in wait for their own lives.

Such is the fate of all who pursue unjust gain; It takes the life of its possessor.

Wisdom b In Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman. cries aloud in the streets, Raises her voice in the squares.

At the head of the busy streets she calls; At the entrance of the gates, in the city, she speaks out:

"How long will you simple ones love simplicity, You scoffers be eager to scoff, You dullards hate knowledge?

You are indifferent to my rebuke; I will now speak my mind to you, And let you know my thoughts.

Since you refused me when I called, And paid no heed when I extended my hand,

You spurned all my advice, And would not hear my rebuke,

I will laugh at your calamity, And mock when terror comes upon you,

When terror comes like a disaster, And calamity arrives like a whirlwind,

When trouble and distress come upon you.

Then they shall call me but I will not answer; They shall seek me but not find me.

Because they hated knowledge, And did not choose fear of the L ORD ;  
They refused my advice, And disdained all my rebukes,  
They shall eat the fruit of their ways, And have their fill of their own counsels.

The tranquillity of the simple will kill them, And the complacency of dullards will destroy them.

But he who listens to me will dwell in safety, Untroubled by the terror of misfortune."

## Chapter 2

My son, if you accept my words And treasure up my commandments;  
If you make your ear attentive to wisdom And your mind open to discernment;

If you call to understanding And cry aloud to discernment,  
If you seek it as you do silver And search for it as for treasures,  
Then you will understand the fear of the L ORD And attain knowledge of God.

For the L ORD grants wisdom; Knowledge and discernment are by His decree.  
He reserves ability for the upright And is a shield for those who live blamelessly,

Guarding the paths of justice, Protecting the way of those loyal to Him.  
You will then understand what is right, just, And equitable—every good course.

For wisdom will enter your mind And knowledge will delight you.  
Foresight will protect you, And discernment will guard you.

It will save you from the way of evil men, From men who speak duplicity,  
Who leave the paths of rectitude To follow the ways of darkness,  
Who rejoice in doing evil And exult in the duplicity of evil men,  
Men whose paths are crooked And who are devious in their course.

It will save you from the forbidden a Lit. "strange." woman, From the alien woman whose talk is smooth,

Who forsakes the companion of her youth And disregards the covenant of her God.

Her house sinks down to Death, And her course leads to the shades.

All who go to her cannot return And find again the paths of life.

So follow the way of the good And keep to the paths of the just.

For the upright will inhabit the earth, The blameless will remain in it.  
While the wicked will vanish from the land And the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

## Chapter 3

My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your mind retain my commandments;

For they will bestow on you length of days, Years of life and well-being.  
Let fidelity and steadfastness not leave you; Bind them about your throat, Write them on the tablet of your mind,

And you will find favor and approbation In the eyes of God and man.

Trust in the L ORD with all your heart, And do not rely on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths smooth.

Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the L ORD and shun evil.

It will be a cure for your body, a Lit. "navel." A tonic for your bones.

Honor the L ORD with your wealth, With the best of all your income,  
And your barns will be filled with grain, Your vats will burst with new wine.

Do not reject the discipline of the L ORD, my son; Do not abhor His rebuke.

For whom the L ORD loves, He rebukes, As a father the son whom he favors.

Happy is the man who finds wisdom, The man who attains understanding.

Her value in trade is better than silver, Her yield, greater than gold.

She is more precious than rubies; All of your goods cannot equal her.

In her right hand is length of days, In her left, riches and honor.

Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths, peaceful.

She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, And whoever holds on to her is happy.

The L ORD founded the earth by wisdom; He established the heavens by understanding;

By His knowledge the depths burst apart, And the skies distilled dew.

My son, do not lose sight of them; Hold on to resourcefulness and foresight.

They will give life to your spirit And grace to your throat.

Then you will go your way safely And not injure your feet.

When you lie down you will be unafraid; You will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.

You will not fear sudden terror Or the disaster that comes upon the wicked,

For the L ORD will be your trust; He will keep your feet from being caught.

Do not withhold good from one who deserves it When you have the power to do it [for him].

Do not say to your fellow, "Come back again; I'll give it to you tomorrow," when you have it with you.

Do not devise harm against your fellow Who lives trustfully with you.

Do not quarrel with a man for no cause, When he has done you no harm.

Do not envy a lawless man, Or choose any of his ways;

For the devious man is an abomination to the L ORD, But He is intimate with the straightforward.

The curse of the L ORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the abode of the righteous.

At scoffers He scoffs, But to the lowly He shows grace.

The wise shall obtain honor, But dullards get disgrace as their portion.

#### Chapter 4

Sons, heed the discipline of a father; Listen and learn discernment, For I give you good instruction; Do not forsake my teaching.

Once I was a son to my father, The tender darling of my mother.

He instructed me and said to me, "Let your mind hold on to my words; Keep my commandments and you will live.

Acquire wisdom, acquire discernment; Do not forget and do not swerve from my words.

Do not forsake her and she will guard you; Love her and she will protect you.

The beginning a Or "best part." of wisdom is—acquire wisdom; With all your acquisitions, acquire discernment.

Hug her to you and she will exalt you; She will bring you honor if you embrace her.

She will adorn your head with a graceful wreath; Crown you with a glorious diadem."

My son, heed and take in my words, And you will have many years of life.

I instruct you in the way of wisdom; I guide you in straight courses.

You will walk without breaking stride; When you run, you will not stumble.

Hold fast to discipline; do not let go; Keep it; it is your life.

Do not enter on the path of the wicked; Do not walk on the way of evil men.

Avoid it; do not pass through it; Turn away from it; pass it by. For they cannot sleep unless they have done evil; Unless they make someone fall they are robbed of sleep.

They eat the bread of wickedness And drink the wine of lawlessness. The path of the righteous is like radiant sunlight, Ever brightening until noon.

The way of the wicked is all darkness; They do not know what will make them stumble.

My son, listen to my speech; Incline your ear to my words.

Do not lose sight of them; Keep them in your mind.

They are life to him who finds them, Healing for his whole body.

More than all that you guard, guard your mind, For it is the source of life.

Put crooked speech away from you; Keep devious talk far from you.

Let your eyes look forward, Your gaze be straight ahead.

Survey the course you take, And all your ways will prosper.

Do not swerve to the right or the left; Keep your feet from evil.

## Chapter 5

My son, listen to my wisdom; Incline your ear to my insight, That you may have foresight, While your lips hold fast to knowledge. For the lips of a forbidden a Lit. "strange." woman drip honey; Her mouth is smoother than oil;

But in the end she is as bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.

Her feet go down to Death; Her steps take hold of Sheol.

She does not chart a path of life; Her course meanders for lack of knowledge.

So now, sons, pay heed to me, And do not swerve from the words of my mouth.

Keep yourself far away from her; Do not come near the doorway of her house

Lest you give up your vigor to others, Your years to a ruthless one; Lest strangers eat their fill of your strength, And your toil be for the house of another;

And in the end you roar, When your flesh and body are consumed, And say, "O how I hated discipline, And heartily spurned rebuke.

I did not pay heed to my teachers, Or incline my ear to my instructors.

Soon I was in dire trouble Amidst the assembled congregation."

Drink water from your own cistern, Running water from your own well.

Your springs will gush forth In streams in the public squares.

They will be yours alone, Others having no part with you.

Let your fountain be blessed; Find joy in the wife of your youth— A loving doe, a graceful mountain goat. Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be infatuated with love of her always.

Why be infatuated, my son, with a forbidden a Lit. "strange." woman? Why clasp the bosom of an alien woman?

For a man's ways are before the eyes of God; He surveys his entire course.

The wicked man will be trapped in his iniquities; He will be caught up in the ropes of his sin.

He will die for lack of discipline, Infatuated by his great folly.

## Chapter 6

My son, if you have stood surety for your fellow, Given your hand for another, a Or "a stranger."

You have been trapped by the words of your mouth, Snared by the words of your mouth.

Do this, then, my son, to extricate yourself, For you have come into the power of your fellow: Go grovel—and badger your fellow; Give your eyes no sleep, Your pupils no slumber.

Save yourself like a deer out of the hand [of a hunter], Like a bird out of the hand of a fowler.

Lazybones, go to the ant; Study its ways and learn.

Without leaders, officers, or rulers,

It lays up its stores during the summer, Gathers in its food at the harvest.

How long will you lie there, lazybones; When will you wake from your sleep?

A bit more sleep, a bit more slumber, A bit more hugging yourself in bed, And poverty will come b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. calling upon you, -b And want, like a man with a shield.

A scoundrel, an evil man Lives by crooked speech,

Winking his eyes, Shuffling his feet, Pointing his finger.

Duplicity is in his heart; He plots evil all the time; He incites quarrels.

Therefore calamity will come upon him without warning; Suddenly he will be broken beyond repair.

Six things the L ORD hates; Seven are an abomination to Him:

A haughty bearing, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,

A mind that hatches evil plots, Feet quick to run to evil,

A false witness testifying lies, And one who incites brothers to quarrel.

My son, keep your father's commandment; Do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Tie them over your heart always; Bind them around your throat.

When you walk it will lead you; When you lie down it will watch over you; And when you are awake it will talk with you.

For the commandment is a lamp, The teaching is a light, And the way to life is the rebuke that disciplines.

It will keep you from an evil woman, From the smooth tongue of a forbidden c Lit. "alien." woman.

Do not lust for her beauty Or let her captivate you with her eyes.

The last loaf of bread will go for a harlot; A married woman will snare a person of honor.

Can a man rake embers into his bosom Without burning his clothes?

Can a man walk on live coals Without scorching his feet?

It is the same with one who sleeps with his fellow's wife; None who touches her will go unpunished.

A thief is not held in contempt For stealing to appease his hunger;

Yet if caught he must pay sevenfold; He must give up all he owns.

He who commits adultery is devoid of sense; Only one who would destroy himself does such a thing.

He will meet with disease and disgrace; His reproach will never be expunged.

The fury of the husband will be passionate; He will show no pity on his day of vengeance.

He will not have regard for any ransom; He will refuse your bribe, however great.

## Chapter 7

My son, heed my words; And store up my commandments with you.

Keep my commandments and live, My teaching, as the apple of your eye.

Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your mind.

Say to Wisdom, "You are my sister," And call Understanding a kinswoman.

She will guard you from a forbidden a Lit. "strange." woman; From an alien woman whose talk is smooth.

From the window of my house, Through my lattice, I looked out And saw among the simple, Noticed among the youths, A lad devoid of sense.

He was crossing the street near her corner, Walking toward her house In the dusk of evening, In the dark hours of night.

A woman comes toward him b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Dressed like a harlot, with set purpose. -b

She is bustling and restive; She is never at home.

Now in the street, now in the square, She lurks at every corner.

She lays hold of him and kisses him; Brazenly she says to him, "I had to make a sacrifice of well-being; Today I fulfilled my vows.

Therefore I have come out to you, Seeking you, and have found you.

I have decked my couch with covers Of dyed Egyptian linen;

I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

Let us drink our fill of love till morning; Let us delight in amorous embrace.

For the man of the house is away; He is off on a distant journey.

He took his bag of money with him And will return only at mid-month."

She sways him with her eloquence, Turns him aside with her smooth talk.

Thoughtlessly he follows her, Like an ox going to the slaughter, b

Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Like a fool to the stocks for punishment -b - Until the arrow pierces his liver. He is like a bird rushing into a trap, Not knowing his life is at stake.

Now, sons, listen to me; Pay attention to my words;

Let your mind not wander down her ways; Do not stray onto her paths.

For many are those she has struck dead, And numerous are her victims.

Her house is a highway to Sheol Leading down to Death's inner chambers.

## Chapter 8

It is Wisdom calling, Understanding raising her voice.

She takes her stand at the topmost heights, By the wayside, at the crossroads,

Near the gates at the city entrance; At the entryways, she shouts,

"O men, I call to you; My cry is to all mankind.

O simple ones, learn shrewdness; O dullards, instruct your minds.

Listen, for I speak noble things; Uprightness comes from my lips;

My mouth utters truth; Wickedness is abhorrent to my lips.

All my words are just, None of them perverse or crooked;

All are straightforward to the intelligent man, And right to those who have attained knowledge.

Accept my discipline rather than silver, Knowledge rather than choice gold.

For wisdom is better than rubies; No goods can equal her.

"I, Wisdom, live with Prudence; I attain knowledge and foresight.

To fear the L ORD is to hate evil; I hate pride, arrogance, the evil way, And duplicity in speech.

Mine are counsel and resourcefulness; I am understanding; courage is mine.

Through me kings reign And rulers decree just laws;

Through me princes rule, Great men and all the a According to some Heb. mss. and printed editions, "judges of the earth." righteous judges. -a Those who love me I love, And those who seek me will find me.

Riches and honor belong to me, Enduring wealth and success.

My fruit is better than gold, fine gold, And my produce better than choice silver.

I walk on the way of righteousness, On the paths of justice.

I endow those who love me with substance; I will fill their treasures.

"The L ORD created me at the beginning of His course As the first of His works of old.  
In the distant past I was fashioned, At the beginning, at the origin of earth.  
There was still no deep when I was brought forth, No springs rich in water;  
Before [the foundations of] the mountains were sunk, Before the hills I was born.  
He had not yet made earth and fields, Or the world's first clumps of clay.  
I was there when He set the heavens into place; When He fixed the horizon upon the deep;  
When He made the heavens above firm, And the fountains of the deep gushed forth;  
When He assigned the sea its limits, So that its waters never transgress His command; When He fixed the foundations of the earth,  
I was with Him as a confidant, A source of delight every day, Rejoicing before Him at all times,  
Rejoicing in His inhabited world, Finding delight with mankind.  
Now, sons, listen to me; Happy are they who keep my ways.  
Heed discipline and become wise; Do not spurn it.  
Happy is the man who listens to me, Coming early to my gates each day,  
Waiting outside my doors.  
For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from the L ORD.  
But he who misses me destroys himself; All who hate me love death."

## Chapter 9

Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn her seven pillars.  
She has prepared the feast, Mixed the wine, And also set the table.  
She has sent out her maids to announce On the heights of the town,  
"Let the simple enter here"; To those devoid of sense she says,  
"Come, eat my food And drink the wine that I have mixed;  
Give up simpleness and live, Walk in the way of understanding."  
To correct a scoffer, a Clauses transposed for clarity. Or rebuke a wicked man for his blemish, Is to call down abuse on oneself. -a  
Do not rebuke a scoffer, for he will hate you; Reprove a wise man, and he will love you.  
Instruct a wise man, and he will grow wiser; Teach a righteous man, and he will gain in learning.  
The beginning of wisdom is fear of the L ORD, And knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.  
For through me your days will increase, And years be added to your life.  
If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; If you are a scoffer, you bear it alone.  
The stupid woman bustles about; She is simple and knows nothing.  
She sits in the doorway of her house, Or on a chair at the heights of the town,  
Calling to all the wayfarers Who go about their own affairs,  
"Let the simple enter here"; And to those devoid of sense she says,  
"Stolen waters are sweet, And bread eaten furtively is tasty."  
He does not know that the shades are there, That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

## Chapter 10

The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father; A dull son is his mother's sorrow.  
Ill-gotten wealth is of no avail, But righteousness saves from death.

The L ORD will not let the righteous go hungry, But He denies the wicked what they crave.

Negligent hands cause poverty, But diligent hands enrich.

He who lays in stores during the summer is a capable son, But he who sleeps during the harvest is an incompetent.

Blessings light upon the head of the righteous, But lawlessness covers the mouth of the wicked.

The name of the righteous is invoked in blessing, But the fame of the wicked rots.

He whose heart is wise accepts commands, But he whose speech is foolish comes to grief.

He who lives blamelessly lives safely, But he who walks a crooked path will be found out.

He who winks his eye causes sorrow; He whose speech is foolish comes to grief.

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, But lawlessness covers the mouth of the wicked.

Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers up all faults.

Wisdom is to be found on the lips of the intelligent, But a rod is ready for the back of the senseless.

The wise store up knowledge; The mouth of the fool is an imminent ruin.

The wealth of a rich man is his fortress; The poverty of the poor is his ruin.

The labor of the righteous man makes for life; The produce of the wicked man makes for want.

He who follows discipline shows the way to life, But he who ignores reproof leads astray.

He who conceals hatred has lying lips, While he who speaks forth slander is a dullard.

Where there is much talking, there is no lack of transgressing, But he who curbs his tongue a Lit. "lips." shows sense.

The tongue of a righteous man is choice silver, But the mind of the wicked is of little worth.

The lips of the righteous sustain many, But fools die for lack of sense. It is the blessing of the L ORD that enriches, And no toil can increase it.

As mischief is sport for the dullard, So is wisdom for the man of understanding.

What the wicked man plots overtakes him; What the righteous desire is granted.

When the storm passes the wicked man is gone, But the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

Like vinegar to the teeth, Like smoke to the eyes, Is a lazy man to those who send him on a mission.

The fear of the L ORD prolongs life, While the years of the wicked will be shortened.

The righteous can look forward to joy, But the hope of the wicked is doomed.

The way of the L ORD is a stronghold for the blameless, But a ruin for evildoers.

The righteous will never be shaken; The wicked will not inhabit the earth.

The mouth of the righteous produces wisdom, But the treacherous tongue shall be cut off.

The lips of the righteous know what is pleasing; The mouth of the wicked [knows] duplicity.

False scales are an abomination to the L ORD ; An honest a Lit. "whole." weight pleases Him.

When arrogance appears, disgrace follows, But wisdom is with those who are unassuming.

The integrity of the upright guides them; The deviousness of the treacherous leads them to ruin.

Wealth is of no avail on the day of wrath, But righteousness saves from death.

The righteousness of the blameless man smooths his way, But the wicked man is felled by his wickedness.

The righteousness of the upright saves them, But the treacherous are trapped by their malice.

At death the hopes of a wicked man are doomed, And the ambition of evil men comes to nothing.

The righteous man is rescued from trouble And the wicked man takes his place.

The impious man destroys his neighbor through speech, But through their knowledge the righteous are rescued.

When the righteous prosper the city exults; When the wicked perish there are shouts of joy.

A city is built up by the blessing of the upright, But it is torn down by the speech of the wicked.

He who speaks contemptuously of his fellowman is devoid of sense; A prudent man keeps his peace.

A base fellow gives away secrets, But a trustworthy soul keeps a confidence.

For want of strategy an army falls, But victory comes with much planning. Harm awaits him who stands surety for another; b Or "a stranger." He who spurns pledging shall be secure.

A graceful woman obtains honor; Ruthless men obtain wealth.

A kindly man benefits himself; A cruel man makes trouble for himself.

The wicked man earns illusory wages, But he who sows righteousness has a true reward.

Righteousness is a prop of life, But to pursue evil leads to death.

Men of crooked mind are an abomination to the L ORD, But those whose way is blameless please Him.

Assuredly, c Lit. "Hand to hand"; meaning of Heb. uncertain. the evil man will not escape, But the offspring of the righteous will be safe.

Like a gold ring in the snout of a pig Is a beautiful woman bereft of sense.

What the righteous desire can only be good; What the wicked hope for [stirs] wrath.

One man gives generously and ends with more; Another stint on doing the right thing and incurs a loss.

A generous person enjoys prosperity; He who satisfies others shall himself be sated.

He who withholds grain earns the curses of the people, But blessings are on the head of the one who dispenses it.

He who earnestly seeks what is good pursues what is pleasing; He who is bent on evil, upon him it shall come.

He who trusts in his wealth shall fall, But the righteous shall flourish like foliage.

He who makes trouble for his household shall inherit the wind; A fool is a slave to the wise-hearted.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; A wise man captivates people.

If the righteous on earth get their deserts, How much more the wicked man and the sinner.

He who loves discipline loves knowledge; He who spurns reproof is a brutish man.

A good man earns the favor of the L ORD, A man of intrigues, His condemnation.

A man cannot be established in wickedness, But the root of the righteous will not be shaken loose.

A capable wife is a crown for her husband, But an incompetent one is like rot in his bones.

The purposes of the righteous are justice, The schemes of the wicked are deceit.

The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush, But the speech of the upright saves them.

Overturn the wicked and they are gone, But the house of the righteous will endure.

A man is commended according to his intelligence; A twisted mind is held up to contempt.

Better to be lightly esteemed and have a servant Than to put on airs and have no food.

A righteous man knows the needs of his beast, But the compassion of the wicked is cruelty.

He who tills his land shall have food in plenty, But he who pursues vanities is devoid of sense.

a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. The wicked covet the catch of evil men; The root of the righteous yields [fruit]. -a

Sinful speech is a trap for the evil man, But the righteous escapes from trouble.

A man gets his fill of good from the fruit of his speech; One is repaid in kind for one's deeds.

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; But the wise man accepts advice.

A fool's vexation is known at once, But a clever man conceals his humiliation.

He who testifies faithfully tells the truth, But a false witness, deceit. There is blunt talk like sword-thrusts, But the speech of the wise is healing.

Truthful speech abides forever, A lying tongue for but a moment.

Deceit is in the minds of those who plot evil; For those who plan good there is joy.

No harm befalls the righteous, But the wicked have their fill of misfortune.

Lying speech is an abomination to the L ORD, But those who act faithfully please Him.

A clever man conceals what he knows, But the mind of a dullard cries out folly.

The hand of the diligent wields authority; The negligent are held in subjection.

If there is anxiety in a man's mind let him quash it, And turn it into joy with a good word.

A righteous man a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. gives his friend direction, -a But the way of the wicked leads astray.

A negligent man never has game to roast; a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. A diligent man has precious wealth. -a

The road of righteousness leads to life; By way of its path there is no death.

## Chapter 13

A wise son—it is through the discipline of his father; A scoffer—he never heard reproof.

A man enjoys good from the fruit of his speech; But out of the throat of the treacherous comes lawlessness.

He who guards his tongue a Lit. "mouth." preserves his life; He who opens wide his lips, it is his ruin.

A lazy man craves, but has nothing; The diligent shall feast on rich fare.

A righteous man hates lies; The wicked man is vile and disgraceful.

Righteousness protects him whose way is blameless; Wickedness subverts the sinner.

One man pretends to be rich and has nothing; Another professes to be poor and has much wealth.

Riches are ransom for a man's life, The poor never heard a reproof.

The light of the righteous is radiant; The lamp of the wicked is extinguished.

b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Arrogance yields nothing but strife; -b Wisdom belongs to those who seek advice.

Wealth may dwindle to less than nothing, But he who gathers little by little increases it.

Hope deferred sickens the heart, But desire realized is a tree of life.

He who disdains a precept will be injured thereby; He who respects a command will be rewarded.

The instruction of a wise man is a fountain of life, Enabling one to avoid deadly snares.

Good sense wins favor; The way of treacherous men is unchanging. c Or "harsh."

Every clever man acts knowledgeably, But a dullard exposes his stupidity.

Harm befalls a wicked messenger; A faithful courier brings healing.

Poverty and humiliation are for him who spurns discipline; But he who takes reproof to heart gets honor.

Desire realized is sweet to the soul; To turn away from evil is abhorrent to the stupid.

He who keeps company with the wise becomes wise, But he who consorts with dullards comes to grief.

Misfortune pursues sinners, But the righteous are well rewarded.

A good man has what to bequeath to his grandchildren, For the wealth of sinners is stored up for the righteous.

The tillage of the poor yields much food; But substance is swept away for lack of moderation.

He who spares the rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him early.

The righteous man eats to his heart's content, But the belly of the wicked is empty.

#### Chapter 14

The wisest of women builds her house, But folly tears it down with its own hands.

He who maintains his integrity fears the L ORD ; A man of devious ways scorns Him.

In the mouth of a fool is a rod of haughtiness, But the lips of the wise protect them.

If there are no oxen the crib is clean, But a rich harvest comes through the strength of the ox.

An honest witness will not lie; A false witness testifies lies.

A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, But knowledge comes easily to the intelligent man.

Keep your distance from a dullard, For you will not learn wise speech.

It is the wisdom of a clever man to understand his course; But the stupidity of the dullard is delusion.

Reparations mediate between fools, Between the upright, good will.

The heart alone knows its bitterness, And no outsider can share in its joy.

The house of the wicked will be demolished, But the tent of the upright will flourish.

A road may seem right to a man, But in the end it is a road to death.

The heart may ache even in laughter, And joy may end in grief.

An unprincipled man reaps the fruits of his ways; a Taking 'al as from 'll; cf. Hos. 12.3. A good man, of his deeds. -a

A simple person believes anything; A clever man ponders his course.

A wise man is diffident and shuns evil, But a dullard rushes in confidently.

An impatient man commits folly; A man of intrigues will be hated.

Folly is the lot of the simple, But clever men b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. glory in knowledge. -b

Evil men are brought low before the good, So are the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

A pauper is despised even by his peers, But a rich man has many friends. He who despises his fellow is wrong; He who shows pity for the lowly is happy.

Surely those who plan evil go astray, While those who plan good earn steadfast love.

From all toil there is some gain, But idle chatter is pure loss.

The ornament of the wise is their wealth; The stupidity of dullards is stupidity.

A truthful witness saves lives; He who testifies lies [spreads] deceit.

Fear of the L ORD is a stronghold, A refuge for a man's children.

Fear of the L ORD is a fountain of life, Enabling one to avoid deadly snares.

A numerous people is the glory of a king; Without a nation a ruler is ruined.

Patience results in much understanding; Impatience gets folly as its portion.

A calm disposition gives bodily health; Passion is rot to the bones.

He who withholds what is due to the poor affronts his Maker; He who shows pity for the needy honors Him.

The wicked man is felled by his own evil; The righteous man finds security in his death.

Wisdom rests quietly in the mind of a prudent man, But among dullards it makes itself known.

Righteousness exalts a nation; Sin is a reproach to any people.

The king favors a capable servant; He rages at an incompetent one.

## Chapter 15

A gentle response allays wrath; A harsh word provokes anger.

The tongue of the wise produces much knowledge, But the mouth of dullards pours out folly.

The eyes of the L ORD are everywhere, Observing the bad and the good.

A healing tongue is a tree of life, But a devious one makes for a broken spirit.

A fool spurns the discipline of his father, But one who heeds reproof becomes clever.

In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, But in the harvest of the wicked there is trouble.

The lips of the wise disseminate knowledge; Not so the minds of dullards. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the L ORD, But the prayer of the upright pleases Him.

The way of the wicked is an abomination to the L ORD, But He loves him who pursues righteousness.

Discipline seems bad to him who forsakes the way; He who spurns reproof will die.

Sheol and Abaddon lie exposed to the L ORD, How much more the minds of men!

The scoffer dislikes being reproved; He will not resort to the wise. A joyful heart makes a cheerful face; A sad heart makes a despondent mood.

The mind of a prudent man seeks knowledge; The mouth of the dullard pursues folly.

All the days of a poor man are wretched, But contentment is a feast without end.

Better a little with fear of the L ORD Than great wealth with confusion. Better a meal of vegetables where there is love Than a fattened ox where there is hate.

A hot-tempered man provokes a quarrel; A patient man calms strife.

The way of a lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright is paved.

A wise son makes his father happy; A fool of a man humiliates his mother. Folly is joy to one devoid of sense; A prudent man walks a straight path. Plans are foiled for want of counsel, But they succeed through many advisers.

A ready response is a joy to a man, And how good is a word rightly timed! For an intelligent man the path of life leads upward, In order to avoid Sheol below.

The L ORD will tear down the house of the proud, But He will establish the homestead of the widow.

Evil thoughts are an abomination to the L ORD, But pleasant words are pure.

He who pursues ill-gotten gain makes trouble for his household; He who spurns gifts will live long.

The heart a For leb as a source of speech, see note to Eccl. 5.1. of the righteous man rehearses his answer, But the mouth of the wicked blurts out evil things.

The L ORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

What brightens the eye gladdens the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones.

He whose ear heeds the discipline of life Lodges among the wise.

He who spurns discipline hates himself; He who heeds reproof gains understanding.

The fear of the L ORD is the discipline of wisdom; Humility precedes honor.

## Chapter 16

A man may arrange his thoughts, But what he says depends on the L ORD.

All the ways of a man seem right to him, But the L ORD probes motives.

Entrust your affairs to the L ORD, And your plans will succeed.

The L ORD made everything for a purpose, Even the wicked for an evil day.

Every haughty person is an abomination to the L ORD ; Assuredly, a Lit.

"Hand to hand"; meaning of Heb. uncertain. he will not go unpunished.

Iniquity is expiated by loyalty and faithfulness, And evil is avoided through fear of the L ORD.

When the L ORD is pleased with a man's conduct, He may turn even his enemies into allies.

Better a little with righteousness Than a large income with injustice.

A man may plot out his course, But it is the L ORD who directs his steps.

There is magic on the lips of the king; He cannot err in judgment.

Honest scales and balances are the L ORD 's; All the weights in the bag are His work.

Wicked deeds are an abomination to kings, For the throne is established by righteousness.

Truthful speech wins the favor of kings; They love those who speak honestly.

The king's wrath is a messenger of death, But a wise man can appease it. The king's smile means life; His favor is like a rain cloud in spring. How much better to acquire wisdom than gold; To acquire understanding is preferable to silver.

The highway of the upright avoids evil; He who would preserve his life watches his way.

Pride goes before ruin, Arrogance, before failure.

Better to be humble and among the lowly Than to share spoils with the proud.

He who is adept in a matter will attain success; Happy is he who trusts in the L ORD.

The wise-hearted is called discerning; One whose speech is pleasing gains wisdom.

Good sense is a fountain of life to those who have it, And folly is the punishment of fools.

The mind of the wise man makes his speech effective And increases the wisdom on his lips.

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweet to the palate and a cure for the body.

A road may seem right to a man, But in the end it is a road to death.

The appetite of a laborer labors for him, Because his hunger b Lit.

"mouth." c Meaning of Heb. uncertain. forces him on. -c

A scoundrel plots c Meaning of Heb. uncertain. evil; What is on his lips is like a scorching fire.

A shifty man stirs up strife, And a querulous one alienates his friend.

A lawless man misleads his friend, Making him take the wrong way.

He closes his eyes while meditating deception; He purses his lips while deciding upon evil.

Gray hair is a crown of glory; It is attained by the way of righteousness.

Better to be forbearing than mighty, To have self-control than to conquer a city.

Lots are cast into the lap; The decision depends on the L ORD.

## Chapter 17

Better a dry crust with peace Than a house full of feasting with strife. A capable servant will dominate an incompetent son And share the inheritance with the brothers.

For silver—the crucible; For gold—the furnace, And the L ORD tests the mind.

An evildoer listens to mischievous talk; A liar gives ear to malicious words.

He who mocks the poor affronts his Maker; He who rejoices over another's misfortune will not go unpunished.

Grandchildren are the crown of their elders, And the glory of children is their parents.

Lofty words are not fitting for a villain; Much less lying words for a great man.

A bribe seems like a charm to him who uses it; He succeeds at every turn. He who seeks love overlooks faults, But he who harps on a matter alienates his friend.

A rebuke works on an intelligent man More than one hundred blows on a fool.

An evil man seeks only to rebel; A ruthless messenger will be sent against him.

Sooner meet a bereaved she-bear Than a fool with his nonsense.  
Evil will never depart from the house Of him who repays good with evil.  
To start a quarrel is to open a sluice; Before a dispute a Meaning of  
Heb. uncertain. flares up, -a drop it.  
To acquit the guilty and convict the innocent— Both are an abomination to  
the L ORD.  
What good is money in the hand of a fool To purchase wisdom, when he has  
no mind?  
A friend is devoted at all times; A brother is born to share adversity.  
Devoid of sense is he who gives his hand To stand surety for his fellow.  
He who loves transgression loves strife; He who builds a high threshold  
invites broken bones.  
Man of crooked mind comes to no good, And he who speaks duplicity falls  
into trouble.  
One begets a dullard to one's own grief; The father of a villain has no  
joy.  
A joyful heart makes for b Or "a cheerful face"; meaning of Heb.  
uncertain. good health; -b Despondency dries up the bones.  
The wicked man draws a bribe out of his bosom To pervert the course of  
justice.  
Wisdom lies before the intelligent man; The eyes of the dullard range to  
the ends of the earth.  
A stupid son is vexation for his father And a heartache for the woman who  
bore him.  
To punish the innocent is surely not right, Or to flog the great for  
their uprightness.  
A knowledgeable man is sparing with his words; A man of understanding is  
reticent.  
Even a fool, if he keeps silent, is deemed wise; Intelligent, if he seals  
his lips.

## Chapter 18

a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. He who isolates himself pursues his desires;  
He disdains all competence. -a  
The fool does not desire understanding, But only to air his thoughts.  
Comes the wicked man comes derision, And with the rogue, contempt.  
The words a man speaks are deep waters, A flowing stream, a fountain of  
wisdom.  
It is not right to be partial to the guilty And subvert the innocent in  
judgment.  
The words of a fool lead to strife; His speech invites blows.  
The fool's speech is his ruin; His words are a trap for him.  
The words of a querulous man are bruising; a Meaning of Heb. uncertain.  
They penetrate one's inmost parts.  
One who is slack in his work Is a brother to a vandal.  
The name of the L ORD is a tower of strength To which the righteous man  
runs and is safe.  
The wealth of a rich man is his fortress; a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. In  
his fancy -a it is a protective wall.  
Before ruin a man's heart is proud; Humility goes before honor.  
To answer a man before hearing him out Is foolish and disgraceful.  
A man's spirit can sustain him through illness; But low spirits—who can  
bear them?  
The mind of an intelligent man acquires knowledge; The ears of the wise  
seek out knowledge.  
A man's gift eases his way And gives him access to the great.  
The first to plead his case seems right Till the other party examines  
him.  
The lot puts an end to strife And separates those locked in dispute.

A brother offended is more formidable than a stronghold; Such strife is like the bars of a fortress.

A man's belly is filled by the fruit of his mouth; He will be filled by the produce of his lips.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue; Those who love it will eat its fruit.

He who finds a wife has found happiness And has won the favor of the L ORD.

The poor man speaks beseechingly; The rich man's answer is harsh.

There are companions to keep one company, And there is a friend more devoted than a brother.

## Chapter 19

Better a poor man who lives blamelessly Than one who speaks perversely and is a dullard.

A person without knowledge is surely not good; He who moves hurriedly blunders.

A man's folly subverts his way, And his heart rages against the L ORD. Wealth makes many friends, But a poor man loses his last friend.

A false witness will not go unpunished; He who testifies lies will not escape.

Many court the favor of a great man, And all are the friends of a dispenser of gifts.

All the brothers of a poor man despise him; How much more is he shunned by his friends! a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. He who pursues words—they are of no avail. -a

He who acquires wisdom is his own best friend; He preserves understanding and attains happiness.

A false witness will not go unpunished; He who testifies falsely is doomed.

Luxury is not fitting for a dullard, Much less that a servant rule over princes.

A man shows intelligence by his forebearance; It is his glory when he overlooks an offense.

The rage of a king is like the roar of a lion; His favor is like dew upon the grass.

A stupid son is a calamity to his father; The nagging of a wife is like the endless dripping of water.

Property and riches are bequeathed by fathers, But an efficient wife comes from the L ORD.

Laziness induces sleep, And a negligent person will go hungry.

He who has regard for his life pays regard to commandments; He who is heedless of his ways will die.

He who is generous to the poor makes a loan to the L ORD ; He will repay him his due.

Discipline your son while there is still hope, And b Or "But." do not c Or "pay attention to his moaning." set your heart on his destruction. -c A hot-tempered man incurs punishment; a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. If you try to save him you will only make it worse. -a

Listen to advice and accept discipline In order that you may be wise in the end.

Many designs are in a man's mind, But it is the L ORD 's plan that is accomplished.

a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Greed is a reproach to a man; -a Better be poor than a liar.

He who fears the L ORD earns life; a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. He shall abide in contentment, -a Free from misfortune.

The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; He will not even bring it to his mouth.

Beat the scoffer and the simple will become clever; Reprove an intelligent man and he gains knowledge.  
A son who causes shame and disgrace Plunders his father, puts his mother to flight.  
My son, cease to stray from words of knowledge And receive discipline.  
A malicious witness scoffs at justice, And the speech of the wicked conceals mischief.  
Punishments are in store for scoffers And blows for the backs of dullards.

## Chapter 20

Wine is a scoffer, strong drink a roisterer; He who is muddled by them will not grow wise.  
The terror of a king is like the roar of a lion; He who provokes his anger risks his life.  
It is honorable for a man to desist from strife, But every fool a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. becomes embroiled. -a  
In winter the lazy man does not plow; At harvesttime he seeks, and finds nothing.  
The designs in a man's mind are deep waters, But a man of understanding can draw them out.  
He calls many a man his loyal friend, But who can find a faithful man?  
The righteous man lives blamelessly; Happy are his children who come after him.  
The king seated on the throne of judgment Can winnow out all evil by his glance.  
Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart, I am purged of my sin"?  
False weights and false measures, Both are an abomination to the L ORD.  
A child may be dissembling in his behavior Even though his actions are blameless and proper.  
The ear that hears, the eye that sees- The L ORD made them both.  
Do not love sleep lest you be impoverished; Keep your eyes open and you will have plenty of food.  
"Bad, bad," says the buyer, But having moved off, he congratulates himself.  
Gold is plentiful, jewels abundant, But wise speech is a precious object.  
Seize his garment, for he stood surety for another; b Or "a stranger."  
Take it as a pledge, [for he stood surety] for an unfamiliar woman.  
Bread gained by fraud may be tasty to a man, But later his mouth will be filled with gravel.  
Plans laid in council will succeed; Wage war with stratagems.  
He who gives away secrets is a base fellow; Do not take up with a garrulous man.  
One who reviles his father or mother, Light will fail him when darkness comes.  
An estate acquired in haste at the outset Will not be blessed in the end.  
Do not say, "I will requite evil"; Put your hope in the L ORD and He will deliver you.  
False weights are an abomination to the L ORD ; Dishonest scales are not right.  
A man's steps are decided by the L ORD ; What does a man know about his own way?  
It is a snare for a man a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. to pledge a sacred gift rashly -a And to give thought to his vows only after they have been made.  
A wise king winnows out the wicked, And turns the wheel upon them.  
The lifebreath of man is the lamp of the L ORD Revealing all his inmost parts.

Faithfulness and loyalty protect the king; He maintains his throne by faithfulness.

The glory of youths is their strength; The majesty of old men is their gray hair.

Bruises and wounds are repayment a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. for evil, Striking at one's inmost parts.

## Chapter 21

Like channeled water is the mind of the king in the L ORD 's hand; He directs it to whatever He wishes.

All the ways of a man seem right to him, But the L ORD probes the mind. To do what is right and just Is more desired by the L ORD than sacrifice. Haughty looks, a proud heart- The tillage of the wicked is sinful.

The plans of the diligent make only for gain; All rash haste makes only for loss.

Treasures acquired by a lying tongue a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Are like driven vapor, heading for extinction. -a

The violence of the wicked sweeps them away, For they refuse to act justly.

The way of a man may be tortuous and strange, Though his actions are blameless and proper.

Dwelling in the corner of a roof is better Than a contentious wife in a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. spacious house. -a

The desire of the wicked is set upon evil; His fellowman finds no favor in his eyes.

When a scoffer is punished, the simple man is edified; When a wise man is taught, he gains insight.

The Righteous One observes the house of the wicked man; He subverts the wicked to their ruin.

Who stops his ears at the cry of the wretched, He too will call and not be answered.

A gift in secret subdues anger, A present in private, fierce rage.

Justice done is a joy to the righteous, To evildoers, ruination.

A man who strays from the path of prudence Will rest in the company of ghosts.

He who loves pleasure comes to want; He who loves wine and oil does not grow rich.

The wicked are the ransom of the righteous; The traitor comes in place of the upright.

It is better to live in the desert Than with a contentious, vexatious wife.

Precious treasure and oil are in the house of the wise man, And a fool of a man will run through them.

He who strives to do good and kind deeds Attains life, success, and honor.

One wise man prevailed over a city of warriors And brought down its mighty stronghold.

He who guards his mouth and tongue Guards himself from trouble.

The proud, insolent man, scoffer is his name, Acts in a frenzy of insolence.

The craving of a lazy man kills him, For his hands refuse to work. All day long he is seized with craving While the righteous man gives without stint.

The sacrifice of the wicked man is an abomination, The more so as he offers it in depravity.

A false witness is doomed, But one who really heard will testify with success.

The wicked man is brazen-faced; The upright man discerns his course. No wisdom, no prudence, and no counsel Can prevail against the L ORD.

The horse is readied for the day of battle, But victory comes from the L ORD.

## Chapter 22

Repute is preferable to great wealth, Grace is better than silver and gold.

Rich man and poor man meet; The L ORD made them both.

The shrewd man saw trouble and took cover; The simple kept going and paid the penalty.

The effect of humility is fear of the L ORD, Wealth, honor, and life.

Thorns and snares are in the path of the crooked; He who values his life will keep far from them.

Train a lad in the way he ought to go; He will not swerve from it even in old age.

The rich rule the poor, And the borrower is a slave to the lender.

He who sows injustice shall reap misfortune; His rod of wrath shall fail.

The generous man is blessed, For he gives of his bread to the poor.

Expel the scoffer and contention departs, Quarrel and contumely cease.

A pure-hearted friend, His speech is gracious; He has the king for his companion.

The eyes of the L ORD watch the wise man; He subverts the words of the treacherous.

The lazy man says, "There's a lion in the street; I shall be killed a Lit. "in the square." if I step outside." -a

The mouth of a forbidden b Lit. "strange." woman is a deep pit; He who is doomed by the L ORD falls into it.

If folly settles in the heart of a lad, The rod of discipline will remove it.

To profit by withholding what is due to the poor Is like making gifts to the rich—pure loss.

Incline your ear and listen to the words of the sages; Pay attention to my wisdom.

It is good that you store them inside you, And that all of them be constantly on your lips,

That you may put your trust in the L ORD. I let you know today—yes, you—Indeed, I wrote down for you c Meaning of Heb. uncertain. a threefold lore, -c Wise counsel,

To let you know truly reliable words, That you may give a faithful reply to him who sent you.

Do not rob the wretched because he is wretched; Do not crush the poor man in the gate;

For the L ORD will take up their cause And despoil those who despoil them of life.

Do not associate with an irascible man, Or go about with one who is hot-tempered,

Lest you learn his ways And find yourself ensnared.

Do not be one of those who give their hand, Who stand surety for debts, Lest your bed be taken from under you When you have no money to pay.

Do not remove the ancient boundary stone That your ancestors set up.

See a man skilled at his work— He shall attend upon kings; He shall not attend upon c Meaning of Heb. uncertain. obscure men. -c

## Chapter 23

When you sit down to dine with a ruler, Consider well who is before you. Thrust a knife into your gullet If you have a large appetite.

Do not crave for his dainties, For they are counterfeit food.

Do not toil to gain wealth; Have the sense to desist.

You see it, then it is gone; It grows wings and flies away, Like an eagle, heavenward.  
Do not eat of a stingy man's food; Do not crave for his dainties; He is like one keeping accounts; "Eat and drink," he says to you, But he does not really mean it.  
The morsel you eat you will vomit; You will waste your courteous words. Do not speak to a dullard, For he will disdain your sensible words.  
Do not remove ancient boundary stones; Do not encroach upon the field of orphans, For they have a mighty Kinsman, And He will surely take up their cause with you.  
Apply your mind to discipline And your ears to wise sayings. Do not withhold discipline from a child; If you beat him with a rod he will not die.  
Beat him with a rod And you will save him from the grave.  
My son, if your mind gets wisdom, My mind, too, will be gladdened. I shall rejoice with all my heart a Lit. "kidneys." When your lips speak right things.  
Do not envy sinners in your heart, But only God-fearing men, at all times,  
For then you will have a future, And your hope will never fail.  
Listen, my son, and get wisdom; Lead your mind in a [proper] path.  
Do not be of those who guzzle wine, Or glut themselves on meat; For guzzlers and gluttons will be impoverished, And drowsing will clothe you in tatters.  
Listen to your father who begot you; Do not disdain your mother when she is old.  
Buy truth and never sell it, And wisdom, discipline, and understanding. The father of a righteous man will exult; He who begets a wise son will rejoice in him.  
Your father and mother will rejoice; She who bore you will exult.  
Give your mind to me, my son; Let your eyes watch my ways.  
A harlot is a deep pit; A forbidden b Lit. "alien." woman is a narrow well.  
She too lies in wait as if for prey, And destroys the unfaithful among men.  
Who cries, "Woe!" who, "Alas!"; Who has quarrels, who complaints; Who has wounds without cause; Who has bleary eyes?  
Those whom wine keeps till the small hours, Those who gather to drain the cups.  
Do not ogle that red wine As it lends its color to the cup, As it flows on smoothly;  
In the end, it bites like a snake; It spits like a basilisk.  
Your eyes will see strange sights; Your heart c See note to 15.28. will speak distorted things.  
You will be like one lying in bed on high seas, Like one lying d Meaning of Heb. uncertain. on top of the rigging. -d  
"They struck me, but I felt no hurt; They beat me, but I was unaware; As often as I wake, I go after it again."

## Chapter 24

Do not envy evil men; Do not desire to be with them; For their hearts a See note to 15.28. talk violence, And their lips speak mischief.  
A house is built by wisdom, And is established by understanding; By knowledge are its rooms filled With all precious and beautiful things.  
A wise man is strength; A knowledgeable man exerts power; For by stratagems you wage war, And victory comes with much planning.  
Wisdom is too lofty for a fool; He does not open his mouth in the gate.

He who lays plans to do harm Is called by men a schemer.  
The schemes of folly are sin, And a scoffer is an abomination to men.  
If you showed yourself slack in time of trouble, Wanting in power,  
If you refrained from rescuing those taken off to death, Those condemned  
to slaughter—

If you say, "We knew nothing of it," Surely He who fathoms hearts will  
discern [the truth], He who watches over your life will know it, And He  
will pay each man as he deserves.

My son, eat honey, for it is good; Let its sweet drops be on your palate.  
Know: such is wisdom for your soul; If you attain it, there is a future;  
Your hope will not be cut off.

Wicked man! Do not lurk by the home of the righteous man; Do no violence  
to his dwelling.

Seven times the righteous man falls and gets up, While the wicked are  
tripped by one misfortune.

If your enemy falls, do not exult; If he trips, let your heart not  
rejoice,

Lest the L ORD see it and be displeased, And avert His wrath from him.  
Do not be vexed by evildoers; Do not be incensed by the wicked;  
For there is no future for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked goes out.  
Fear the L ORD, my son, and the king, And do not mix with dissenters,  
For disaster comes from them suddenly; The doom both decree who can  
foreknow?

These also are by the sages: It is not right to be partial in judgment.  
He who says to the guilty, "You are innocent," Shall be cursed by  
peoples, Damned by nations;

But it shall go well with them who decide justly; Blessings of good  
things will light upon them.

Giving a straightforward reply Is like giving a kiss.

Put your external affairs in order, Get ready what you have in the field,  
Then build yourself a home.

Do not be a witness against your fellow without good cause; Would you  
mislead with your speech?

Do not say, "I will do to him what he did to me; I will pay the man what  
he deserves."

I passed by the field of a lazy man, By the vineyard of a man lacking  
sense.

It was all overgrown with thorns; Its surface was covered with chickweed,  
And its stone fence lay in ruins.

I observed and took it to heart; I saw it and learned a lesson.

A bit more sleep, a bit more slumber, A bit more hugging yourself in bed,  
And poverty will come b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. calling upon you, -b  
And want, like a man with a shield.

## Chapter 25

These too are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of King Hezekiah of  
Judah copied:

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, And the glory of a king to  
plumb a matter.

Like the heavens in their height, like the earth in its depth, Is the  
mind of kings—unfathomable.

The dross having been separated from the silver, A vessel emerged for the  
smith.

Remove the wicked from the king's presence, And his throne will be  
established in justice.

Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence; Do not stand in the place  
of nobles.

For it is better to be told, "Step up here," Than to be degraded in the  
presence of the great. Do not let what your eyes have seen

Be vented rashly in a quarrel; Think a Lit. "Lest." of what it will effect in the end, When your fellow puts you to shame.

Defend your right against your fellow, But do not give away the secrets of another,

Lest he who hears it reproach you, And your bad repute never end.

Like golden apples in silver showpieces b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Is a phrase well turned.

Like a ring of gold, a golden ornament, Is a wise man's reproof in a receptive ear.

Like the coldness of snow at harvesttime Is a trusty messenger to those who send him; He lifts his master's spirits.

Like clouds, wind-but no rain- Is one who boasts of gifts not given.

Through forbearance a ruler may be won over; A gentle tongue can break bones.

If you find honey, eat only what you need, Lest, surfeiting yourself, you throw it up.

Visit your neighbor sparingly, Lest he have his surfeit of you and loathe you.

Like a club, a sword, a sharpened arrow, Is a man who testifies falsely against his fellow.

Like a loose tooth and an unsteady leg, Is a treacherous support in time of trouble.

Disrobing on a chilly day, Like vinegar on natron, Is one who sings songs to a sorrowful soul.

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; If he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

You will be heaping live coals on his head, And the L ORD will reward you.

A north wind produces rain, And whispered words, a glowering face.

Dwelling in the corner of a roof is better Than a contentious woman in b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. a spacious house. -b

Like cold water to a parched throat Is good news from a distant land.

Like a muddied spring, a ruined fountain, Is a righteous man fallen before a wicked one.

It is not good to eat much honey, b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Nor is it honorable to search for honor. -b

Like an open city without walls Is a man whose temper is uncurbed.

## Chapter 26

Like snow in summer and rain at harvesttime, So honor is not fitting for a dullard.

As a sparrow must flit and a swallow fly, So a gratuitous curse must backfire. a Kethib, "fail."

A whip for a horse and a bridle for a donkey, And a rod for the back of dullards.

Do not answer a dullard in accord with his folly, Else you will become like him.

Answer a dullard in accord with his folly, Else he will think himself wise.

He who sends a message by a dullard Will wear out legs and b Lit. "drink." must put up with -b lawlessness.

As legs hang limp on a cripple, So is a proverb in the mouth of dullards.

Like a pebble in a sling, So is paying honor to a dullard.

As a thorn comes to the hand of a drunkard, So a proverb to the mouth of a dullard.

c Meaning of Heb. uncertain. A master can produce anything, -c But he who hires a dullard is as one who hires transients. -c

As a dog returns to his vomit, So a dullard repeats his folly.

If you see a man who thinks himself wise, There is more hope for a dullard than for him.

A lazy man says, "There's a cub on the road, a lion in the squares."

The door turns on its hinge, And the lazy man on his bed.

The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; He will not even bring it to his mouth.

The lazy man thinks himself wiser Than seven men who give good advice. A passerby who gets embroiled in someone else's quarrel Is like one who seizes a dog by its ears.

Like a madman c Meaning of Heb. uncertain. scattering deadly firebrands, arrows,

Is one who cheats his fellow and says, "I was only joking."

For lack of wood a fire goes out, And without a querulous man contention is stilled.

Charcoal for embers and wood for a fire And a contentious man for kindling strife.

The words of a querulous man are bruising; c Meaning of Heb. uncertain. They penetrate one's inmost parts.

Base silver laid over earthenware Are ardent lips with an evil mind.

An enemy dissembles with his speech, Inwardly he harbors deceit.

Though he be fair-spoken do not trust him, For seven abominations are in his mind.

His hatred may be concealed by dissimulation, But his evil will be exposed to public view.

He who digs a pit will fall in it, And whoever rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.

A lying tongue hates c Meaning of Heb. uncertain. those crushed by it; -c Smooth speech throws one down.

## Chapter 27

Do not boast of tomorrow, For you do not know what the day will bring. Let the mouth of another praise you, not yours, The lips of a stranger, not your own.

A stone has weight, sand is heavy, But a fool's vexation outweighs them both.

There is the cruelty of fury, the overflowing of anger, But who can withstand jealousy?

Open reproof is better than concealed love.

Wounds by a loved one are long lasting; The kisses of an enemy are profuse.

A sated person despairs honey, But to a hungry man anything bitter seems sweet.

Like a sparrow wandering from its nest Is a man who wanders from his home.

Oil and incense gladden the heart, And the sweetness of a friend is better than one's own counsel.

Do not desert your friend and your father's friend; Do not enter your brother's house in your time of misfortune; A close neighbor is better than a distant brother.

Get wisdom, my son, and gladden my heart, That I may have what to answer those who taunt me.

The shrewd man saw trouble and took cover; The simple kept going and paid the penalty.

Seize his garment, for he stood surety for another; a Or "a stranger."

Take it as a pledge, [for he stood surety] for an unfamiliar woman.

He who greets his fellow loudly early in the morning Shall have it reckoned to him as a curse.

An endless dripping on a rainy day And a contentious wife are alike;

As soon repress her as repress the wind, Or declare one's right hand to be oil.

As iron sharpens iron So a man sharpens the wit b Lit. "face." of his friend.

He who tends a fig tree will enjoy its fruit, And he who cares for his master will be honored.

As face answers to face in water, So does one man's heart to another.

Sheol and Abaddon cannot be satisfied, Nor can the eyes of man be satisfied.

For silver—the crucible, for gold—the furnace, And a man is tested by his praise.

Even if you pound the fool in a mortar With a pestle along with grain, His folly will not leave him.

Mind well the looks of your flock; Pay attention to your herds;

For property does not last forever, Or a crown for all generations.

Grass vanishes, new grass appears, And the herbage of the hills is gathered in.

The lambs will provide you with clothing, The he-goats, the price of a field.

The goats' milk will suffice for your food, The food of your household, And the maintenance of your maids.

## Chapter 28

The wicked flee though no one gives chase, But the righteous are as confident as a lion.

When there is rebellion in the land, many are its rulers; a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. But with a man who has understanding and knowledge, stability will last. -a

A poor man who withholds what is due to the wretched Is like a destructive rain that leaves no food.

Those who forsake instruction praise the wicked, But those who heed instruction fight them.

Evil men cannot discern judgment, But those who seek the L ORD discern all things.

Better is a poor man who lives blamelessly Than a rich man whose ways are crooked.

An intelligent son heeds instruction, But he who keeps company with gluttons disgraces his father.

He who increases his wealth by loans at discount or interest Amasses it for one who is generous to the poor.

He who turns a deaf ear to instruction— His prayer is an abomination.

He who misleads the upright into an evil course Will fall into his own pit, But the blameless will prosper.

A rich man is clever in his own eyes, But a perceptive poor man can see through him.

When the righteous exult there is great glory, But when the wicked rise up men make themselves scarce.

He who covers up his faults will not succeed; He who confesses and gives them up will find mercy.

Happy is the man who is anxious always, But he who hardens his heart falls into misfortune.

A roaring lion and a prowling bear Is a wicked man ruling a helpless people.

A prince who lacks understanding is very oppressive; He who spurns ill-gotten gains will live long.

A man oppressed by bloodguilt will flee to a pit; Let none give him support.

He who lives blamelessly will be delivered, But he who is crooked in his ways will fall all at once.

He who tills his land will have food in plenty, But he who pursues vanities will have poverty in plenty.  
A dependable man will receive many blessings, But one in a hurry to get rich will not go unpunished.  
To be partial is not right; A man may do wrong for a piece of bread.  
A miserly man runs after wealth; He does not realize that loss will overtake it.  
He who reproves a man will in the end Find more favor than he who flatters him.  
He who robs his father and mother and says, "It is no offense," Is a companion to vandals.  
A greedy man provokes quarrels, But he who trusts the L ORD shall enjoy prosperity.  
He who trusts his own instinct is a dullard, But he who lives by wisdom shall escape.  
He who gives to the poor will not be in want, But he who shuts his eyes will be roundly cursed.  
When the wicked rise up, men go into hiding, But when they perish the righteous increase.

## Chapter 29

One oft reproved may become stiffnecked, But he will be suddenly broken beyond repair.  
When the righteous become great the people rejoice, But when the wicked dominate the people groan.  
A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, But he who keeps company with harlots will lose his wealth.  
By justice a king sustains the land, But a fraudulent man tears it down.  
A man who flatters his fellow Spreads a net for his feet.  
An evil man's offenses are a trap for himself, But the righteous sing out joyously.  
A righteous man is concerned with the cause of the wretched; A wicked man cannot understand such concern.  
Scoffers inflame a city, But the wise allay anger.  
When a wise man enters into litigation with a fool There is ranting and ridicule, but no satisfaction.  
Bloodthirsty men detest the blameless, But the upright seek them out.  
A dullard vents all his rage, But a wise man calms it down.  
A ruler who listens to lies, All his ministers will be wicked.  
A poor man and a fraudulent man meet; The L ORD gives luster to the eyes of both.  
A king who judges the wretched honestly, His throne will be established forever.  
Rod and reproof produce wisdom, But a lad out of control is a disgrace to his mother.  
When the wicked increase, offenses increase, But the righteous will see their downfall.  
Discipline your son and he will give you peace; He will gratify you with dainties.  
For lack of vision a people lose restraint, But happy is he who heeds instruction.  
A slave cannot be disciplined by words; Though he may comprehend, he does not respond.  
If you see a man hasty in speech, There is more hope for a fool than for him.  
A slave pampered from youth a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Will come to a bad end. -a  
An angry man provokes a quarrel; A hot-tempered man commits many offenses.

A man's pride will humiliate him, But a humble man will obtain honor.  
He who shares with a thief is his own enemy; He hears the imprecation and  
does not tell. b Cf. Lev. 5.1.  
A man's fears become a trap for him, But he who trusts in the L ORD shall  
be safeguarded.  
Many seek audience with a ruler, But it is from the L ORD that a man gets  
justice.  
The unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, And he whose way is  
straight is an abomination to the wicked.

### Chapter 30

The words of Agur son of Jakeh, [man of] Massa; The speech of the man to  
Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal:  
I am brutish, less than a man; I lack common sense.  
I have not learned wisdom, Nor do I possess knowledge of the Holy One.  
Who has ascended heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in  
the hollow of his hand? Who has wrapped the waters in his garment? Who  
has established all the extremities of the earth? What is his name or his  
son's name, if you know it?  
Every word of God is pure, A shield to those who take refuge in Him.  
Do not add to His words, Lest He indict you and you be proved a liar.  
Two things I ask of You; do not deny them to me before I die:  
Keep lies and false words far from me; Give me neither poverty nor  
riches, But provide me with my daily bread,  
Lest, being sated, I renounce, saying, "Who is the L ORD?" Or, being  
impoverished, I take to theft And profane a Meaning of Heb. uncertain.  
the name of my God.  
Do not inform on a slave to his master, Lest he curse you and you incur  
guilt.  
There is a breed of men that brings a curse on its fathers And brings no  
blessing to its mothers,  
A breed that thinks itself pure, Though it is not washed of its filth;  
A breed so haughty of bearing, so supercilious;  
A breed whose teeth are swords, Whose jaws are knives, Ready to devour  
the poor of the land, The needy among men.  
The leech has two daughters, "Give!" and "Give!" Three things are  
insatiable; Four never say, "Enough!":  
Sheol, a barren womb, Earth that cannot get enough water, And fire which  
never says, "Enough!"  
The eye that mocks a father And disdains the homage due a mother- The  
ravens of the brook will gouge it out, Young eagles will devour it.  
Three things are beyond me; Four I cannot fathom:  
How an eagle makes its way over the sky; How a snake makes its way over a  
rock; How a ship makes its way through the high seas; How a man has his  
way with a maiden.  
Such is the way of an adulteress: She eats, wipes her mouth, And says, "I  
have done no wrong."  
The earth shudders at three things, At four which it cannot bear:  
A slave who becomes king; A scoundrel sated with food;  
A loathsome woman who gets married; A slave-girl who supplants her  
mistress.  
Four are among the tiniest on earth, Yet they are the wisest of the wise:  
Ants are a folk without power, Yet they prepare food for themselves in  
summer;  
The badger is a folk without strength, Yet it makes its home in the rock;  
The locusts have no king, Yet they all march forth in formation;  
You can catch the lizard b Or "spider." in your hand, Yet it is found in  
royal palaces.

There are three that are stately of stride, Four that carry themselves well:

The lion is mightiest among the beasts, And recoils before none;  
a Meaning of Heb. uncertain. The greyhound, the he-goat, The king whom none dares resist. -a

If you have been scandalously arrogant, If you have been a schemer, Then clap your hand to your mouth.

As milk under pressure produces butter, And a nose under pressure produces blood, So patience under pressure produces strife.

### Chapter 31

The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, with which his mother admonished him: No, my son! No, O son of my womb! No, O son of my vows!

Do not give your strength to women, Your vigor, a Lit. "ways." b Meaning of Heb. uncertain. to those who destroy kings. -b

Wine is not for kings, O Lemuel; Not for kings to drink, Nor any strong drink for princes,

Lest they drink and forget what has been ordained, And infringe on the rights of the poor.

Give strong drink to the hapless And wine to the embittered.

Let them drink and forget their poverty, And put their troubles out of mind.

Speak up for the dumb, For the rights of all the unfortunate.

Speak up, judge righteously, Champion the poor and the needy.

What a rare find is a capable wife! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies.

Her husband puts his confidence in her, And lacks no good thing.

She is good to him, never bad, All the days of her life.

She looks for wool and flax, And sets her hand to them with a will.

She is like a merchant fleet, Bringing her food from afar.

She rises while it is still night, And supplies provisions for her household, The daily fare of her maids.

She sets her mind on an estate and acquires it; She plants a vineyard by her own labors.

She girds herself with strength, c Lit. "And exerts her arms." And performs her tasks with vigor. -c

She sees d Lit. "tastes." that her business thrives; Her lamp never goes out at night.

She sets her hand to the distaff; Her fingers work the spindle.

She gives generously to the poor; Her hands are stretched out to the needy.

She is not worried for her household because of snow, For her whole household is dressed in crimson.

She makes covers for herself; Her clothing is linen and purple.

Her husband is prominent in the gates, As he sits among the elders of the land.

She makes cloth and sells it, And offers a girdle to the merchant.

She is clothed with strength and splendor; She looks to the future cheerfully.

Her mouth is full of wisdom, Her tongue with kindly teaching.

She oversees the activities of her household And never eats the bread of idleness.

Her children declare her happy; Her husband praises her,

"Many women have done well, But you surpass them all."

Grace is deceptive, Beauty is illusory; It is for her fear of the L ORD That a woman is to be praised.

Extol her for the fruit of her hand, And let her works praise her in the gates.